Illinois Early Learning Council
Data, Research, and Evaluation Committee
January 14, 2016
10am – 12pm

Ounce of Prevention Fund
33 W. Monroe, Suite 2400, Chicago, IL 60603

Call-in number: (888) 494-4032
Participant code: 6113045703

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Participants:
In-Person: Elliot Regenstein, Teri Talan, Sandy De Leon, Mary Beth Corrigan, Jill Massino, Fiona Anderson, Carie Bires, Carmen Garcia, Julia Zhu, Dan Harris, Jon Furr, Dawn Thomas, Andi Irawan, Bernard Cesarone, Jonathan Doster, Lesley Schwartz, Anna Colaner, Kathy Stohr, Bob Spatz, and Alex Baptiste.

Phone: Serah Fatani, David Alexander, Renee Tetrick, Tosha Smith, Lori Baas, Lisa Hood, Jenna Chapman, Joellyn Whitehead, Brenda Klostermann, Cindy Zumwalt, Steve Bradshaw, and Peter Mulhall.

1. **Welcome and Introductions**
2. **Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes**
   The meeting minutes from September 4, 2015 were formally approved.

3. **All Families Served Subcommittee Child Homelessness Workgroup Data Discussion**
   Carie Bires explained that the All Families Served Subcommittee of the Family and Community Engagement Committee has focused on the needs of priority populations. The Child Homelessness Workgroup stemmed from that emphasis. Carie introduced the handout titled "All Families Served Strategy Memo", which organizes the group's thoughts and analysis.
   - The Workgroup has focused attention on data. Without data, good policy decisions are difficult to make. There are many gaps and inconsistencies regarding data collection of homeless children. The status of homeless children is unknown and very complicated.

   Carie asked the group to review part two of the "All Families Served Strategy Memo" and the document titled "Relevant legislation, administrative rules, etc. summary". As highlighted in the two documents, data collection and reporting varies. Schools and Head Start programs are required to report information on homeless children. The child care assistance program and the Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) program will soon require reporting on the enrollment of homeless children. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act part C mandates that homeless children with disabilities be identified via Child Find. But those children are not tracked once identified. Further, data across agencies and programs is tracked in different ways. For example, home visiting programs at the Ounce of Prevention Fund report information every six months. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) collects a point-and-time count. Data is collected on families that use HUD-funded services.

   Andi Irawan shared preliminary thoughts on methodology. Andi mentioned that U.S. Census does not typically collect data on homelessness. This population is likely captured in other ways, but data is not deconstructed. The 2010 U.S. Census Special Report on Transitional and Emergency Shelter Population is considered the best report. But even this report has limitations as not all homeless children and families are found at mobile food banks and soup kitchens. Andi shared that there are five main data sources on homelessness:
   - Homelessness Research
   - National Center for Homeless Education
   - National Center for Family Homelessness

- HUD Annual Homeless Assessment Report
- And locally, Preschool For All

Looking at the zero to five population is difficult and an impractical strategy as the data collection process would have to start from scratch.

Maia Connors asked a clarifying question: is the Workgroup looking at the number of programs where homeless children are served or the total number of homeless children? Carie answered that the Workgroup would first like to learn about the homeless children being served with the hope of obtaining more information on the total number of homeless children.

- Dan Harris referenced the goal on the document titled "All Families Served Strategy Memo". Dan believes that estimating the total number of homeless children is ancillary and not referenced in the goal. Carie agrees that the "to what end" question has been a topic of discussion with the Workgroup. Maia pushes the group to think again about the questions. If in fact the number of children served is the focus, consideration should be given to the amount of resources provided to homeless children.

Dawn Thomas said there have been disincentives for school districts to accurately report homeless children. Carie said it is clear that there is underreporting of homeless children. Information is not reported because it is not required. There are several issues around training of staff, monitoring and compliance, general compliance and data points.

Elliot Regenstein believes that this conversation is about both the numerator and the denominator. The numerator helps us look at the children already being served in programs and ways to track them better. It's important to make the distinction between capacity and policy issues. It is quite possible that a homelessness data act could be drafted to require agencies and programs to collect data with details on how data should be collected. But not all agencies have the capacity to collect more data. It's important to decide on a starting point: Do we want to resolve the conflicts between agencies where data collection is different? Or do we focus on capacity of agencies? He asked that group to consider both options in this discussion.

- Anna Colaner suggested that if capacity was developed, it could trigger agencies to track data better.
- Elliot mentioned a consideration on how much energy and money it will take to change the data systems. Jon Furr says that the technology is less of a problem than training people to understand the value of the data they are collecting.

Dan Harris asked if inventory has been taken on how "homelessness" is defined across agencies. Carie said that there is uniformity in definition. Dan added that because of the dynamic nature and fluidity of the homeless population, what type of measures should be proposed? A point-in-time count? Or during the course of the year? Carie said that if a child is eligible for McKinney-Vento homeless services in a school district, they are eligible for services the remainder of the school year.

- Elliot stated that if the homeless definition is the same across agencies, then the challenge of building capacity might be done consistently. But the data being collected doesn't appear to be consistent. Elliot suggests a more granular level table of the "Relevant legislation, administrative rules, etc. summary" document. Such an exercise could review what data is being collected on homelessness now. Dawn and Carie said there has been some preliminary work done.
- Elliot suggested a focus on the root cause of data collection to assess why and how agencies are collecting data. It's not clear if data has been traditionally gathered in a certain way or if data collection is a result of legal requirements.
- Carie responded that besides school based programs and Head Start, there are no requirements of any program to collect data on homeless families. With that in mind, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) does the best job of collecting data as ISBE must follow federal requirements. Elliot recommends a crosswalk of data collection across agencies. This could show gaps in technology to gather data. Carie

added that Early Intervention does not collect any data on homeless children, so a clear gap does exist there.

- Jonathan Doster said that if legislative action is required, a review of the rules within different agencies would have to be done. He brought up that Home Visiting is not in state statute. It would be a difficult task because legislative changes wouldn't impact all of the programs. Elliot said he does not believe it's a legislative fix, but rather model language must be adopted by all agencies.

Mary Beth Corrigan asked how duplication would be handled as the same child may receive several different services from multiple agencies. Elliot noted that unduplicated counts are a larger problem than just counting homeless children.

Dawn Thomas mentioned the idea of universal of data because Innovation Zones (IZ) are trying to reach populations in need. Many IZ communities want to target homeless families and struggle to do so. Maybe there should be a shift to talking more about homeless families and not just children since no one seems to be able to locate the children.

Bob Spatz asked more about school districts. Children zero to three are not always in a school setting. In that case, is a term such as "housing insecure" more suitable for continuity of service? Also, we do not want to pose a disincentive to becoming stably housed. The nature of homelessness is that it can change frequently making data collection difficult. Continuity of care is difficult if it changes on a daily basis. Bob asked if using the word homeless is to the detriment of families. Carie said that Chicago Public Schools has a temporary living situation program.

- Anna Colaner said definitional issues are not unique to homelessness as similar issues arise when collecting data on race and ethnicity across programs. Anna asked the group if there is a way to sort the biggest issue or consider the first lift. She suggested looking at possible communities where a strategy could be piloted and suggested the IZ or systems building work.
  - Elliot suggested that Anna's idea for a project would focus on capacity not the policy issue. Anna thinks that once capacity is addressed, policy issues will present themselves. Jon Furr said a pilot could be done using the Illinois childhood matching project data. The homeless data entered could be broken down to the IZ level and communities could be given data to assess.

To summarize, Elliot identified three ideas discussed: an analysis of cross-sector data collection, an analysis of policy and differences in data collection, and capacity building with a community-based project looking at ways to serve homeless children across programs.

- Jon believes the first and last points are connected to the data analysis that can occur within communities.
- Lesley Schwartz suggested looking at data from other programs such as the Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) program and Medicaid. Carie and Dawn said the Workgroup did review programs where children are most likely present but the WIC and Medicaid programs do not collect data on housing status.
- Dan stated there are many state, federal, and local organizations serving the homeless. Families are likely receiving services where children are benefitting. He wondered if there was information being collected on those families. Carie said that the homeless service community does collect information based on HUD requirements. But shelters that are not federally funded do not necessarily collect such information. Again, the point-and-time count done by HUD only counts for families on the street or in shelters. Most families are not living on the street but rather in temporary living arrangements like being "doubled-up".

Teri Talan asked if there are unintended consequences if homeless families report that they are "doubled-up". Kathy Stohr said that for Section 8 benefits, participants could lose their housing. Carie said that was true for

Section 8 housing but said other programs, such as home visiting, have no issue. But she admits that many families do not report their real housing situation out of fear.

Dan Harris brought another point up for consideration. One perspective might be to ensure homelessness indicators are standardized across all programs. Programs could perhaps use a set of proxy indicators that would point towards possible homelessness. Or perhaps it is better to have a combination of indicators rather than a single indicator. Carie said that a proposed indicator could be if a family changes their address multiple times within a given period of time. Jon Furr said that within the Illinois Longitudinal Data System (ILDS) framework, different information from multiple agencies could be flagged as long as individual identity is verified across various programs.

- To that point, Sandy De Leon asked what questions programs are asking to assess homelessness. Carie said that ISBE does ask several questions and that children are found to be McKinney-Vento eligible versus labelled as homeless.
- Elliot said if the group is considering ISBE as a model, we need to assess what data points are necessary to collect for all programs. Also, we need to assess if those data points in fact give us the information we want. It could be possible that we need some higher indicators that are bigger priorities that get us what we would need for policies.

Kathy Stohr said the capacity issue relates to work on the ground level. Therefore we must assess how capturing homeless data would benefit programs and staff. Kathy suggested presenting this conversation in a different frame such stating that housing insecurity would cause issues with continuity of service. She feels this would be the selling point as agencies are concerned with breaks in service.

Andi Irawan said he believes we have developed two steps based out of this conversation. The first is to do an exercise to get an estimate of homeless data. The second step is to do a pilot project on a small scale. The empirical process could help refine the community pilot and vice versa. Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map (IECAM) could offer assistance on the empirical side and other agencies could get involved to identify a pilot project site.

Carie thanked the DRE for its time and will share the suggestion with the Workgroup.

4. **Updates**
   a. **RTT-ELC**
      Kathy Stohr introduced herself at the Deputy Director of the Governor's Office of Early Childhood Development (OECD). She shared that Theresa Hawley resigned as Executive Director. Kelley Washington has been appointed as the new Executive Director and is taking on the responsibility of the Early Learning Council (ELC) and the governance work. Kathy will continue to run the day-to-day operations of the office.
      - Regarding the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge grant, year four has started and there is still much work to be done. There are several priorities for this year: scope of work and the final round of contracts for FY17. It is important that all of the money is spent in the grant, although there is an option to apply for a no cost extension. Data is an area where money has been underspent and it is necessary to be thoughtful on the best places to allocate resources. Data is a priority area and there are some unobligated resources in that data project. Regarding the no cost extension, it must be applied for and considerations must be made on the potential consequences. As the grant runs out, the state must focus on sustainability. Given the incredible fiscal uncertainty in Illinois, the State must continue to build on the investments made thus far.
      - Teri Talan asked if the no cost extension could be applied to the continuing ILDS data matching work. Kathy shared that data is a large state priority.

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Anna Colaner provided an update on several pieces of work:

- The Quality Rating and Improvement System data validation study by Frank Porter Graham (FPG) at the University of North Carolina continues. FPG has subcontracted work to the Chicago regional office of American Institute of Research. Out of the 175 programs wanted for the study, 92% have been recruited, with child care centers on board. Child assessment data has been collected and will occur again at the end of the project to compare against the initial assessments. Interviews with schools and center directors have occurred and some teacher surveys are being done now. Eventually there will be Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale observations. Information is now available on the OECD website along with a fact sheet.
- The University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) is evaluating the Lead Learn Excel work done by the Ounce of Prevention Fund. UIC is working on the implementation data. Work is coming along with data sharing agreements. Maia Connors said that the work is ongoing and there is a lot of analysis.
- As mentioned in previous DRE meetings, Illinois used Race to the Top funds to pay for an oversample. Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago is finishing the workforce analysis and will continue to work on other reports such as supply and demand and the informal child care market. This information will be shared once it is complete.
- Regarding the data dashboard work, the Department of Human Services (DHS) is in the process of awarding a contract for that work.
- Lastly, an email will be sent on the partnership work that stemmed from the researcher-policymaker summit that was convened last year. Starting in February, there will be monthly lunch and learn sessions. The first session will feature Juliet Bromer and Jon Korfmacher from the Erikson Institute. The event will be on February 23 from 12:30 to 1:30pm at Erikson Institute. Anna will send an email with details on registration. Participants should bring their own lunch.

b. **UECDS/LDS**

Jon Furr provided an update. The website for the ILDS is now up. The website is IllinoisLDS.org. The ILDS work can be found there along with updates on projects. Jon asked the group to share suggestions for the resource page.

The seven agencies part of ILDS—Illinois State Board of Higher Education, Illinois Community College Board, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Illinois Department of Employment Security, Illinois Department of Human Service, Illinois Student Assistance Commission, and the Illinois State Board of Education—are continuing with identity resolution and Master Client Index. At this point, data sharing agreements are in place with all agencies but DHS still has a security release pending. Six agencies have transferred data to Northern Illinois University Center for Governmental Studies. Data from four agencies have been fully processed and 21 million records have gone through the Index and will continue to support integration. Jon said this is a large milestone and the first iteration of identity resolution.

Before identity resolution work began, there was a matching project between ISBE's Preschool For All and DHS's child care assistance program data. A lot of site administered data has been received—over 5,000 Excel Spreadsheets worth of information. Work is underway to integrate DHS data and ExceleRate data. The big goal for this project is to get the site administered data, Preschool For All, and child care assistance program data matched. After that, work can start with the IECAM team to get information at the community level. The work with IECAM would help obtain information about transitions from preschool to kindergarten. Peter Mulhall has been a good partner in getting Head Start collaboration

and Head Start data. The majority of the work has been for 3- to 5-year-olds and now looking to capture data for children birth to 3-year-olds.
- Projected timeline for the standardized data is six months and beyond. Initial projects will be tested and reviewed to see if the cases align with other analysis or the Research Agenda.
- Discussions with the ILDS technical team and the Health and Human Services Investing in Innovation project (HHS I2) have occurred to share learnings. This will help reduce duplicated efforts.
  - Mary Beth Corrigan said that the Department of Child and Family and Services (DCFS) was involved in the HHS I2 project. She suggested the work of DCFS wards and their participation in child care and preschool participation as an option. Jon shared that the team has been in preliminary conversations with DCFS.

c. **Federal and State Data Legislation**
Elliot Regenstein provided an update. The Every Student Succeeds Act passed Congress but it didn't tackle data security issues and those items remain in Congress. Both parties have offered constructive legislation but it remains unclear if anything will happen this year.

Regarding state data legislation, Jonathan Doster provided an update. State Representative Scott Drury has been quiet and no other legislators have raised issues over data legislation.

d. **Early Learning Council meetings**
Teri Talan shared that the Executive Committee of the ELC has approved the Research Agenda and it is now posted on the OECD website. Further, the ELC continues discussions on sustainability of the council and committees. Teri challenged the group to think of what that means for the work of this committee. Elliot reminded the group that much of the ELC work has been funded through federal grants and the grants are winding down. There have been ideas proposed that some of the ELC committees may get absorbed in the P-20 Council.
- Teri shared that the P-20 Council does different type of work than the ELC. Cindy Zumwalt agreed that early childhood education work would look very different in that council.
- Elliot said that Beth Purvis, Secretary of Education and co-chair of the ELC, has expressed a desire to create connectivity with the P-20 Council. The Data Accountability Committee of the P-20 Council has a large focus on assessments such as Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, also known as PARCC. Clearly, that is very different work from the DRE's purview. Data system work will continue beyond the completion of the federal grants, so that work must be preserved possibly through the support of private donors or other means.
  - Bob Spatz asked if the "P" in P-20 stands for "preschool" and if the 0-3 space is covered. Dan Harris shared that during multiple occasions Beth Purvis has stated that the "P" stands for "Prenatal". Dan said he previously was a part of the P-20 Council to bring an early childhood lens to the table.

e. **Research Agenda Update**
Elliot Regenstein provided an update. The Research Agenda is now posted on the OECD website. The Research Agenda was featured in the January 8 OECD newsletter. The DRE will work with universities and funders on research projects reflected on the agenda. Elliot shared the Research Agenda with the Alliance for Early Success listserv and advocates from other states. A few people already emailed about the Research Agenda. He has received compliments for the questions on homelessness.
- Brenda Klostermann asked if there was a feedback loop in place. Anna Colaner answered that as part of her work connecting researchers and policy makers, she is willing to connect information. Elliot said that there is an email address posted on the OECD website and in the Research Agenda. Anyone can send information to the email address which will go to the DRE staffer.

f. **ISBE Early Childhood Data IT positions**

Cindy Zumwalt provided an update. She explained that the positions are not related to Information Technology but rather a request for sealed proposals (RFSP) to improve data collection at ISBE. The result of the RSFP will be posted on the Illinois procurement bulletin within the next week or so. Cindy will send a notice when the procurement bulletin is updated and there is more information on the positions.

Elliot Regenstein said that the DRE will circulate the ISBE Board meeting minutes from the October where the information was presented. The November packet can also be circulated where there will be minutes from the October meeting.

5. **Wrap-up/Additional Items**
   No updates or additional items.

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Action Items

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- **Anna Colaner will send an email with details on the Lunch and Learn on February 23.**
- **DRE staffer will share the October ISBE board packet and the November ISBE board meeting minutes with information on the new ISBE positions related to early childhood data systems. Cindy Zumwalt will share final information on the positions once it has been posted on the Illinois procurement bulletin.**
- **DRE committee members are encouraged to widely share the Research Agenda to interested parties or networks.**